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## **Virginia Students Now Third in the Nation in Advanced Placement Achievement**

### ***College Board Credits Rigorous Academic Standards and Innovative Programs***

Virginia now boasts the nation's third-highest percentage of high school seniors earning a grade of 3 or better on Advanced Placement (AP) examinations, the College Board said today in its fourth annual *Advanced Placement Report to the Nation*. Virginia ranked fourth in the previous College Board report.

During 2007, 21.5 percent of the commonwealth's public high school seniors earned a grade of 3 or more on at least one AP examination, compared with 20.7 in 2006 and 16.9 percent in 2002. Only two states, New York and Maryland, had higher percentages of seniors earning grades of 3 or better on AP tests during 2007.

"The journey from competence to excellence begins when schools challenge all students to reach higher," said Governor Timothy M. Kaine. "These latest Advanced Placement results reflect the commitment of the commonwealth to broadening access to opportunities once reserved for the most elite students."

"Students who master the content of the Standards of Learning are ready for the rigors of college-level courses," said Superintendent of Public Instruction Billy K. Cannaday Jr. "And as demonstrated by their performance on AP examinations, Virginia students are among the best prepared in the nation."

The number of Virginia public high school students who took at least one AP test increased by 11.3 percent in 2007, to 49,834 from 44,778 in 2006. These students took a total of 90,198 AP examinations, an increase of 11.7 percent over 2006. The number of examinations earning a score of 3 or above, generally qualifying for college credit, taken by public school students in Virginia increased by 12.3 percent in 2007, to 53,920.

"Outstanding high schools and an accountability system that includes incentives for schools to exceed minimum benchmarks have made Virginia a national leader in AP participation and achievement," said Board of Education President Mark E. Emblidge.

Virginia promotes AP participation through the Early College Scholars initiative and the Virtual Virginia distance learning program. Early College Scholars participants commit to earning a semester of college credit through AP and other college-level courses while completing the requirements for an Advanced Studies Diploma. Virtual Virginia provides AP courses online and ensures that students in all of the commonwealth's high schools have access to a variety of AP courses. Students may also substitute AP examinations for end-of-course Standards of Learning tests.